

Week Ending Friday, April 18, 1997

**Proclamation 6986—National
Service and Volunteer Week, 1997**

April 11, 1997

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Citizen service is a vital force in American life, helping to build a stronger sense of community and citizenship and engaging Americans to meet the obligations we all share. Whether tutoring children, mentoring teens, renovating housing, restoring public parks, responding to natural disasters, or caring for aging parents and grandparents, those who serve and volunteer are strengthening our communities for America's future.

The era of big government may be over, but the era of big challenges for our Nation is surely not. Citizen service reflects one of the most basic convictions of our democracy: that we are all responsible for one another. It is a very American idea that we meet our challenges not through big government or as isolated individuals, but as members of a true community, with all of us working together.

Americans can take pride in knowing that our tradition of service is being preserved and expanded. As we recognize the devoted service of our Nation's citizens, we must continue to foster the spirit of volunteerism, making service the common expectation and experience of every American. Working together, we can respond to our shared problems and build a better future for the generations to come.

National Service and Volunteer Week is a time to celebrate the American spirit of service and volunteerism and a time to encourage citizens to use their individual talents to serve the common good. During this week and throughout the year, let us salute all those who devote their time, their talents, and their energy to improving our communities—through organizations like Ameri-

Corps and other programs within the Corporation for National Service; the Points of Light Foundation; Learn and Serve America; the National Senior Service Corps; and thousands of other voluntary, civic, religious, and neighborhood groups.

Later this month, at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, we will convene an historic Presidents' Summit on Service. I will be joined there by every living former president, or his representative, and other prominent Americans as we take specific steps to serve our children and to rebuild our communities. Our mission is nothing less than to spark a renewed national sense of obligation, a new sense of duty, a new season of service.

I hope that the many related activities in the days leading up to this important event will make all Americans think about our shared responsibility for one another. Citizen service can take many shapes—it can mean joining AmeriCorps as a high school student, volunteering nights or on weekends in a religious group or neighborhood association, or devoting years of one's life to service in the Peace Corps or in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week of April 13 through April 19, 1997, as National Service and Volunteer Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities to express appreciation for all those who serve and to encourage others to continue the American legacy of service.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:17 a.m., April 14, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 12, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on April 15.

Memorandum on Expanded Family and Medical Leave Policies

April 11, 1997

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Expanded Family and Medical Leave Policies

I have strongly supported meeting Federal employees' family and medical leave needs through enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and the Federal Employees Family Friendly Leave Act of 1994 (FEFFLA). However, Federal employees often have important family and medical needs that do not qualify for unpaid leave under the FMLA or sick leave under the FEFFLA. I ask you to take immediate action to assist Federal workers further in balancing the demands of work and family.

Last year I proposed to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. My legislation would allow Federal and eligible private sector workers 24 hours of unpaid leave during any 12-month period to fulfill certain family obligations. Under the legislation, employees could use unpaid leave to participate in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of a child, including early childhood education activities; accompany children to routine medical and dental examinations; and tend to the needs of older relatives.

In furtherance of my proposed policy, I ask that you take immediate action within existing statutory authorities to ensure that Federal employees may schedule and be granted up to 24 hours of leave without pay each year for the following activities:

(1) *School and Early Childhood Educational Activities*—to allow employees to participate in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of a child. This would include parent-teacher conferences or meetings with child-care providers, interviewing for a

new school or child-care facility, or participating in volunteer activities supporting the child's educational advancement. In this memorandum, "school" refers to an elementary school, secondary school, Head Start program, or a child-care facility.

(2) *Routine Family Medical Purposes*—to allow parents to accompany children to routine medical or dental appointments, such as annual checkups or vaccinations. Although these activities are not currently covered by the FMLA, the FEFFLA does permit employees to use up to 13 days of sick leave each year for such purposes. Agencies should assure that employees are able to use up to 24 hours of leave without pay each year for these purposes in cases when no additional sick leave is available to employees.

(3) *Elderly Relatives' Health or Care Needs*—to allow employees to accompany an elderly relative to routine medical or dental appointments or other professional services related to the care of the elderly relative, such as making arrangements for housing, meals, phones, banking services, and other similar activities. Although Federal employees can use unpaid leave or sick leave for certain of these activities under the FMLA or FEFFLA, such as caring for a parent with a serious health condition, agencies should ensure employees can use up to 24 hours of unpaid time off each year for this broader range of activities related to elderly relatives' health or care needs.

This new policy will assure that Federal employees can schedule and receive up to 24 hours away from the job each year for these family and medical circumstances. I also urge you to accommodate these employee needs as mission requirements permit, even when it is not possible for employees to anticipate or schedule leave in advance for these purposes. In addition, I ask that you support employees' requests to schedule paid time off—such as annual leave, compensatory time off, and credit hours under flexible work schedules—for these family activities when such leave is available to these em-